Allotment of PCO/ISD/STD in Assam

2614. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications pending with Government for allotment of PCO/ISD/STD in the various cities of Assam and since when; and

(b) the details of such PCO/ISD/STD sanctioned and allotted by Government in the State during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) A total of 194 applications are pending for allotment of STD/ISD/PCOs in Assam. The oldest application is pending since 24th November, 1994.

(b) 5872 STD/ISD/PCOs have been installed in the State of Assam during the last three years *i.e.* 1998-99, 1999-2000 and 2000-2001.

Foreign Tours of Officers/Employees of the Department of Communications

†2615. SHRI MUNAVVAR HASAN: Will the MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the names and designations of the officers/employees of the Department of Communications/Bharat Sanchar Nigam/Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd. proceeded on foreign tours during the last three months; and

(b) the names of the countries visited by each officer/employee and what were the purposes of the visit and achievements of those visits and the amount spent on each visit, separately ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) and (b) The details are given in the Annexure [*See* Appendix 194, Annexure No. 23].

Utilization of Post Office Network

2616. SHRI C. P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to utilize vast network of post offices in retail financial services and products of different entities;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the department has reached on any agreement with private parties in this regard;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.